

**Virginia-Highland Civic Association
2012/2013 Strategic Plan**

March 11, 2013

In accordance with Article I, Section 7 of the Bylaws of Virginia-Highland Civic Association, the following goals and objectives are presented for comment and adoption by the Board of Directors. These goals and objectives will guide the Board of Directors in carrying out the business of the Association, through the following committees:

- I. Budget Committee**
- II. Communications Committee**
- III. Education Committee**
- IV. Fundraising Committee**
- V. Parks Committee**
- VI. Planning Committee**
- VII. Safety Committee**

I. Budget Committee

Committee Members: Artruo Cruz-Tucker, Chair, Lola Carlisle, Jack White

Responsibilities: Keep the financial records of the Association. Insure that the general legal financial obligations of the association are met and that the assets of the association are safeguarded. Review budget procedures and bookkeeping practices in order to improve access to and understanding of financial information.

- Categorize costs to provide an accurate understanding of committee expenses and expenditures to the Board;
- Keep an accurate record of income and expenses of the Association;
- Monitor committee budgets and goals to ensure that adequate funding exists for all proposals and projects;
- Report actual and proposed expenses to allow for reallocation of funds as new projects and goals are identified throughout the year;
- Recommend and maintain appropriate insurance coverage for the Association and its officers and volunteers;
- Establish and implement standard practices of fiduciary responsibility within the association.

Specific goals for 2013:

1. Present a final report on Tour of Home by end of calendar year.
2. Present an initial report of Summerfest at the June meeting, a preliminary one at the July meeting, and a final one by the August meeting. Tighten the deadlines for receipt of monies owed.
3. Create a monthly budget report and present it to the Budget Committee.
4. Create a quarterly budget report and present it to the Board and membership.

5. Create and circulate a Budget Calendar for the Committee that includes financial deadlines.
6. Continue to employ an independent bookkeeper and improve ways for cross-checking balances.

II. **Communications Committee**

Chair: John Becker. **Committee Members:** Brian Gross, Lola Carlisle, Ida Centner, Mary Johnson

Broad Objectives:

1. Raise awareness of the Association's and neighborhood's activities, primarily through the effective use of electronic media - VHCA website, VOICE electronic newsletter, social media, et al.
2. Provide hard copies of such materials (US mail or hand delivery) to VaHi citizens who do not have electronic access.
3. Ensure that all communications are vetted through the communications committee and other appropriate committees.
4. Look for opportunities to actively engage subscribers through use of electronic media (i-contests).
5. Promote advertising in the VOICE.
6. Grow our database of email addresses. Keep it easy for subscribers to opt in and out.
7. Develop and implement a strategy for using social media in communicating with subscribers. Maintain an appropriate presence on Facebook (including separate websites and Facebook pages for events like Summerfest and Tour of Homes). Monitor the VHLIST, NextDoor VaHi, the Patch, and relevant media and recommend appropriate responses, as needed.
8. Provide needed assistance to ensure effective promotion of those events (in addition to maintaining SF and TOH pages on the VHCA website).
9. Reach out to communication chairs from nearby neighborhoods and find ways to leverage each mutual communication efforts and email databases to increase overall reach.
10. Work cooperatively with local publications (Creative Loafing, Atlanta Intown, et al) to share content, leverage subscriber databases, etc.
11. Work with Committee and Board members to maintain communications plan and modify as needed.
12. Improve effectiveness of email campaigns and quality of email layout with tools like MailChimp, Formstack, and Survey Monkey.
13. Identify areas where content can be improved (i.e., zoning/planning, education.)

Specific Goals for 2013:

1. Publish the Voice twice a month.

2. Bring in new volunteers to help with ad sales, copywriting, and photography.
3. Monitor ad types, sizes, and pricing; recommend adjustments as appropriate. Report ad status bi-annually.
4. Establish relationships with communication chairs in neighboring communities and establish processes for exchanging and posting information.
5. Maximize online content and resources by training Board members to use CMS and encouraging members to place as much relevant content and information online as possible themselves.

VII. Education Committee

Broad Goals

Become the authoritative source in the community for information about the school board, education issues, the formal challenges facing VaHi, and the information and data presented about those challenges.

Specific Goals for 2013:

- Interact and report on PTO, PTA, and LSA activities.
- Provide periodic updates on local school events and developments to the Voice.
- Provide regularly on community groups like CINS, SNAPPS, and NAPPS.
- Post school events on the VHCA calendar.
- Develop an Education pages with timelines, data links, and information in the public weal (including news stories) for the VHCA website, and Grady.
- Work with the Safety Committee to improve pedestrian access and safety along Briarcliff at SPARK and to improve traffic issues at Inman.

IV. Fundraising Committee

Summerfest

Primary Contacts: Pamela Papner, Ann Guy

Broad Goals:

1. Develop a new business model now that WZGC (nee 'Dave FM') has changed to a news/talk format.
2. Identify & train new committee members; increase the Committee's capacity.
3. Attempt to earn revenues equivalent to or greater than last year.
4. Offer a fun, safe, quality event for all ages.
5. Continue to solicit participation by local businesses.
6. Maintain the high quality of artwork; report on that at the conclusion of the event.
7. Continue the successful community parade & dinner. Examine ways of keeping costs in check while making it a celebratory neighborhood event.

Specific Goals for 2013:

- Maintain quality of music comparable to years' past.
- Attempt to secure media partnerships to replace former radio partnership.
- Utilize marketing company to sell festival sponsorships of at least \$100K
- Sell 10-15 available neighborhood sponsorships.
- Pay attention to cost of beverages and select those that will maximize contribution margin, subject to sponsorship constraints.
- Implement tighter beverage cash controls / possible cup inventory program, if feasible.
- Monetize Kidsfest again this year.
- Maintain cost of artist market booths at last year's level.
- Trial having a farmer's market in JH Park on Saturday morning.
- Secure more road race sponsorships this year.
- Generate sufficient and effective publicity and advertising.
- Develop brochure with artist names/locations, as we did last year
- Appoint specific person to be in charge of print/online PR.
- Post street banners on light posts and within square.
- Encourage participation by and benefits to local businesses.

Timeline:

- Get contracts pursuant to new business model in place by January 2013.
- Hold a kick-off meeting no later than February 2013.
- File Festival permit with City of Atlanta by February 2013.
- Team leader final plans in place by 3/15/13
- Finalize artist market and sponsor layout by 4/1/13
- Put up posters and banners by May 1, 2013.
- Review and finalize event insurance by 5/1/13
- Hold the community dinner on Friday, 5/31/13
- Festival dates: June 1-2, 2013.

B. VHCA ToH

Primary Contacts 2013: Angelika Taylor – Chair, Bill Bell, Eleanor Barrineau, Sally Clark, Arturo Cruz-Tucker, Gina Hecht, Melinda Muffley, Kris Smith, Julie Brow, Sarah Tomaka, Juliet White

Broad Goals:

- Maintain the Tour as one of the premier events of its kind in the region.
- Maintain its grassroots feel while showcasing a variety of interesting homes and structures paired with local restaurants.
- Improve the profitability of the tour through close analysis of past successes and failures. Ensure sponsorship money is successfully solicited and collected.
- Develop a cohesive team to put on a neighborhood friendly event.
- Be cognizant of issues regarding infill housing during the home selection process and

- showcase the importance of the historic character of Va-Hi via the homes selected.
- Create more tie-ins with the local Virginia-Highland Business Community.

Specific Goals for 2013:

- Increase sponsorship revenues to offset the potential loss of revenue in the event of inclement weather.
- Select homes by the target date.
- Think through crowding issues and propose a plan for testing.
- Address insurance needs when overall liability policy is being renewed – early May.
- Address in writing and in meetings the challenge of sponsor conflicts at individual homes.
- Develop a plan to insure that food supplies are available throughout the specified hours. Review and plan with restaurants.
- Reduce signage expenses. Formalize a long-range plan for signage.
- Develop a more detailed publicity plan early.

IV. Parks Committee

John Howell Park, Orme Park, Triangle, New Highland Park and Streetscape

Primary Contacts: Lauren Wilkes Fralick and Jack White

Broad Goals:

- Develop and share a detailed narrative of each Park’s needs and contemplated responses.
- Monitor and advocate for all VaHi community parks and public spaces.
 - Organize and create a network of citizens interested in parks and park activities for each park. Stage occasional volunteer days to work on plantings and cleanups, etc. Promote Parks Committee interest.
 - Oversee new plantings with the Parks Department and non-profits such as Trees Atlanta.
- Look for opportunities to effectively advocate for uniting the city’s arborists – currently split between Parks and the Bureau of Buildings – into one cohesive and managed unit. Develop a group of interested citizens to monitor, volunteer, and advocate for the park.
 - Develop and maintain a functional and inclusive relationship with the CoA Parks Department that makes effective use of the services they can provide.

Specific goals for 2013

John Howell Park

- Develop and publish a ‘Section Plan’ for JHP that identifies the conceptual approaches and short-term horticultural goals in each area, based on the approaches begun in 2012.
- Fund and monitor the work planned for this year. Develop a plan for future action.

- Solicit, define, and accept a bid for a plan for the renovation of JHP based on the Park Pride grant, including at minimum (1) the renovation of the Arcadia Street end: the erosion of sand from and around the volleyball courts, its transport onto city streets and the sewer system, definition of the separation between the courts and the Cunard Playground, removal and replacement of the chain link fences, development of a corner plaza with a relocated park sign, installation of a sidewalk along Arcadia, and as much replanting as is practical, and (2) the stabilization of the gully between the lower and upper park levels that ends the erosion of that bank and promotes and absorbs as much stormwater as practical above and below the site. One specific measure will be the end of soils reaching DeLeon Street and entering the city's stormwater system; (3) the completion of the missing brickwalk sections on the upper level.
- Develop a plan for providing matching funds for all the Park Pride grants. Specific sources may include cash allocations from the budget, in-kind labor, donations from citizens and park users, funds raised by Volleyball Atlanta (which may be renamed), the sale of commemorative bricks, in-kind donations from vendors, and
- Develop a comprehensive plan that systematically addresses the challenges posed by the existing uses of John Howell Park, improves its appearance and minimizes maintenance.
- Begin its implementation, including (but not limited to) these tasks: Simplify the planting at the Virginia Ave. entrance and the Howell Memorial. Prune & clean understory areas. Repair the fence on the southern boundary of the park. Remove all invasive plants. Design and determine cost of a set of steps from the lower western levels park to the higher areas on the east. Identify, cost, prioritize and plan for additional tasks.

New Highland Park

Goals:

- Develop a committee of interested citizen users.
- Monitor the park's usage and functionality in its first full year of operation. Install additional signage as needed.
- Apply for more grants & plan fundraisers to earn incremental funds to apply to retirement of mortgage debt.
- Organize & recruit more resident participation in fundraising.
- Utilize the land for revenue-producing activities (weddings, special events) that produce income equal to the taxes, insurance, and utility costs.

Orme Park

- Look for new members for the Orme Park Committee.
- Monitor the growth and functionality of the renovation completed two years ago.
- Execute the contemplated riparian restoration – the reduction of invasive plants in the riparian corridor and the installation of appropriate new native ones - with Trees Atlanta.
- Continue the park's well-established tradition of community participation by having at least one spring or fall volunteer day. Hold 2 meetings of the Orme Park committee.

D. The Triangle and Streetscape (and other street frontages)

- Install and maintain seasonal and perennial plantings in the Triangle.
- Address the challenge of restricting citizens' traversing the Triangle by installing a symbolic or actual fence of other barrier.
- Try to convince the Parks arborists to remove and replace the two Bradford Pears in front of Belly.
- Cost and repair the loose electrical boxes in the tree wells.

V. PLANNING COMMITTEE:

Primary Contacts: Mark Arnold, Chip Bullock, Lola Carlisle, Genny Ferraro, Jack White, Karen Feigh, Jess Windham

Broad Goals:

- Review all new applications for variances, special exceptions, and liquor licenses and make recommendations to the Board.
- Represent the Association at NPU-F meetings, with special attention to NPU activities that impact Virginia-Highland. Provide updates and feedback to the VHCA Board.
- Attend relevant BZA meetings to advocate for VHCA and/or NPU decisions. Monitor trends and developments within the BZA.
- Monitor the development of public policies in the city that might impact the neighborhood and the Association, with a particular emphasis on land use, zoning, transportation and the environment.
- Monitor the ongoing development of the commercial nodes to ensure that development does not adversely affect residents and traffic patterns in the surrounding streets.
- Compile and maintain a record of all existing businesses in each NC node. Share with the City and business owners a list of each node's eating and drinking establishments.
- Expand our database of existing and historic traffic volume, flows, and impacts.
- Review public education policies and help educate residents so they can respond to their Planning impacts.
- Respond to citizen complaints and concerns about potential building code violations.
- Monitor Beltline-related developments, CDP updates and other citywide transportation and development initiatives.

Specific Goals for 2013:

- Develop a strategy for creating a master transportation plan for VaHi, including – but not limited to – a vision for reduced speeds on and a safer pedestrian and cycle-friendly Monroe Drive, a more functional intersection at 10th and Monroe, and safer pedestrian access across Briarcliff Road at Spark.
- Continue to strive for short and long-term solutions to the traffic congestion at Inman Middle School.
- Identify subdivisions of the neighborhood appropriate for historic designation. Develop and implement a strategy for explaining the options, advantages, and limits to the citizenry and for testing the viability of implementation. Recommend an

implementation strategy to the Board.

- Report the Planning Committee’s formal decisions to our own Communications committee by the Friday following the Planning meeting for posting on our web site. Report the Board’s actions on Planning to our Communications committee and NPU-F for posting on the web site by the Wednesday following the Board meeting.
- Create and maintain an online database of variance applications, accessible by address.
- Continue to monitor the stormwater mitigation strategies at Callanwolde and Laurel Heights and their outcomes for downstream residents on Rosedale Road.
- Provide formal opportunities for the committee, board, & public to increase their understanding of the Neighborhood Commercial code and the Beltline Overlay District and their meaning & application within VaHi.
- Formalize the committee’s approach and response to variance applications. (Ongoing goal from 2012.)
- Map parking spaces and their assignors at each NC node. (Unfilled goal from 2012.)
- In conjunction with the Planning Department and our council member, examine the wisdom of a change to the code for the VaHi NC districts that allows a very limited number of easily-measurable seats in a new (or revised) category of licensing (possibly labeled “Retail Eating.”)

B. Preservation & History

Primary Contacts: Lola Carlisle, Brian Gross, Karri Hobson-Pape, Judy Potter, Jack White

Mission: Identify and preserve the historic features and defining qualities of Virginia-Highland. Gather and archive historic documents, images, and stories.

Specific goals for 2013:

- 1) Continue to search for a permanent site to house a VH History Center; speak with local commercial property owners and city officials regarding available space in visible locations.
- 2) Maintain and expand historic archives (already in existence as result of research done for historic designation and the book “Images of America – Virginia-Highland”) and digitize historic images and documents – post (on an ongoing basis) on site within VHCA site. (The majority of these archives belong to Lola Carlisle and Karri Hobson-Pape, who will have final approval of any uses of these images.)
- 3) Expand the site’s collection of historic maps.
- 4) Inform the citizenry about the preservation of historic features and their defining qualities.
- 5) Be a resource for those supporting historic preservation in VaHi.
- 6) Encourage the selection of historic homes on Tour of Homes and provide histories of those homes as informational and educational purposes.
- 7) Monitor and comment on the Virginia-Highland and other relevant Wikipedia pages.
- 8) As merited, create History Committee Awards that credit individuals, businesses, architects, and others who have given exemplary support to the history committee mission.

- 9) Encourage school-based documentaries and projects that support the VH History Committee mission.
- 10) Examine the advantages of installing signage noting the neighborhood's listing on the national historic registry.
- 11) Display historic images at public events and places.
- 12) Identify and recommend actions to protect historic sites and their defining qualities. Identify research incentives that encourage preservation, matching grants, and tax write-offs, etc. Research and apply for grants that help preserve and define historic features, including (but – amazingly - not limited to) the Orme Park Bridge, Orme Creek, Malcomb's Way, the community's functional and remnant service alleys, historic signs (the painted sugar sign at Key Lime Pie, the Belly Coke sign – last hand painted Coke mural), Inman School, specific houses/businesses (Padgett Home, Dr. Denmark's Home/Office, Cohen Condos, Adair Home, Atkins Park Tavern, Moe's & Joe's), the Todd graveyard, Fire Station #19.
- 13) Identify the advantages and challenges of creating a system of historic markers
- 14) Examine other organizations' activities for useful practices.
- 15) Conduct walking history tours and events, both for their educational merit and to raise funds.

VI. Safety Committee

Primary Contact: Peggy Berg, David Wolfson, Eleanor Barrineau
Ex-officio: John Wolfinger

Broad goals:

- Use community resources (residents/businesses) and governmental resources to promote a safe, clean, and orderly neighborhood to provide a safe quality of life for citizens.
- Expand the committee's membership and capacity.
- Expand and support the Street Captain program.
- Continue trash walks, Court Watch, and crime summaries.
- Advocate for programs and policies within the City of Atlanta that promote safe and functional sidewalks and crosswalks and a pedestrian-friendly neighborhood.
- Work with and support the new community based program to encourage business owners to better maintain the Streetscape and its curb appeal.
- Coordinate and share info with the Planning and Education Committees (& others as needed) on common issues (parking, school safety, event licensing, etc.)
- Use a variety of media - including Street Captain email lists, VH List, vahi.org, NextDoor, et al. - to share information with the neighborhood and promote participation in Safety initiatives.

Specific Goals for 2013:

Safety

- Hold an annual Street Captain's meeting and Public Safety meeting.

- Hold an annual Safety public meeting.
- Maintain a working relationship with FBAC and encourage that group to be highly visible, effective at outreach, integrated with the community on a daily basis, financially viable, responsive to quality of life issues, and viewed as a neighborhood asset.
- Meet with other neighborhood patrol groups and compare their services and costs.
- Provide opportunistic support (holiday dinners, e.g.) to local Public Safety personnel.

Sidewalks

- Advocate for public policy changes in the city that both encourage the city to assume formal responsibility for and fund sidewalk repairs and greatly simplify the capacity of citizens to make their own repairs as desired.
- Continue to participate on the Sidewalk Committee and advocate for safer pedestrian and cycling measures.
- Monitor the anticipated CoA bond issue that contemplates funding for sidewalk repair.
- Push the city to fulfill its commitment to complete the sidewalk repairs on St. Charles Avenue identified and funded in 2012 by residents and VHCA.
- As practical, develop a similar program in a second section of the neighborhood.
- Using the methodology developed by VaHi resident Dr. Randy Guensler and his grad students at Georgia Tech, inventory the neighborhood's sidewalks and provide that data to the city's Public Works department.

Traffic & Transportation

- With the Planning Committee, develop a formal transportation plan for VaHi.
- With the Education Committee, work to improve pedestrian safety along Briarcliff near Spark.
- Work with the CoA to restore and enforce the directional signage at the Triangle.